Preliminary Amdt. dated September 22, 2003
This Preliminary Amdt. accompanying the filing
of a Divisional Application.

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.-10. (Cancelled).

11.   (Original) A packet-based network system, comprising:

a first communication device for sending and receiving packets including a first plurality of ports and a first bonded port set including at least two bonded ports;

a second communication device for sending and receiving packets including a second plurality of ports and a second bonded port set including at least two bonded ports;

a bonded link coupled between said first and second bonded port sets of said first and second communication devices, said bonded link including a connection line between respective bonded ports of said first and second bonded port sets;

said first communication device selecting any one of its bonded ports for each packet received by said first communication device to be sent to said second communication device; and

said second communication device selecting any one of its bonded ports for each packet received by said second communication device to be sent to said first communication device.

12.   (Original) The network system of claim 11, wherein said first and second communication devices each select bonded ports to send packets so as to evenly distribute packets on said bonded port.

13.   (Original) The network system of claim 12, wherein said first and second communication devices select bonded ports on a packet by packet basis.

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14.   (Original) The network system of claim 12, each packet including a unique source identifier, wherein said first and second communication devices select bonded ports by assigning a bonded port to each source identifier.

15.   (Original) The network system of claim 14, wherein:

said first communication device assigns source identifiers received by said first bonded port set to said bonded ports of said first bonded port set on an approximately equal basis;

said first communication device assigns bonded ports among source identifiers received by its non-bonded ports on an approximately equal basis;

said second communication device assigns source identifiers received by said second bonded port set to said bonded ports of said second bonded port set on an approximately equal basis; and

said second communication device assigns bonded ports among source identifiers received by its non-bonded ports on an approximately equal basis.

16.   (Original) The network system of claim 11, wherein:

said first and second bonded port sets including bonded ports operating at different bandwidths; and

wherein said first and second communication devices select bonded ports to distribute packets sent on each bonded port in proportion to its bandwidth.

17.   (Original) The network system of claim 11, wherein said first and second communication devices are network switches.

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18.   (Original) The network system of claim 11, further comprising:

a third communication device for sending and receiving packets including a third plurality of ports and a third bonded port set including at least two bonded ports;

said first communication device including a fourth plurality of ports and a fourth bonded port set including at least two bonded ports;

a second bonded link coupled between said third and fourth bonded port sets of said third and first communication devices, said bonded link including a connection link between respective bonded ports of said third and fourth bonded port sets;

for each packet received by said first communication device to be sent to said third communication device, said first communication device selecting any one of its bonded ports; and

for each packet received by said third communication device to be sent to said first communication device, said third communication device selecting any one of its bonded ports.

19.   (Original) The network system of claim 19, wherein said first, second, third and fourth communication devices are network switches.

20.-27. (Cancelled).